

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-9 are pending. By this Amendment, claims 1, 4 and 7 are amended.

Reconsideration in view of the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

At the outset, Applicants appreciate the courtesies extended by Examiner Nasri to Applicants' representative during a telephonic interview conducted on October 13, 2004. The substance of the telephonic interview is discussed in the following remarks.

Claims 1-9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Hatanaka (U.S. Patent No. 5,017,149) or Morgenrath (U.S. Patent No. 4,690,476). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 is directed to a plug retaining assembly comprising a plug, a socket to interface with the plug, and a retaining clip. The plug includes a lug and the retaining clip includes a lug engaging mechanism adapted to disengage at a predetermined force applied to the plug. Neither Hatanaka nor Morgenrath teaches or suggests this subject matter. In particular, neither teaches that the plug includes a lug and the retaining clip includes a lug engaging mechanism adapted to disengage at a predetermined release force applied to the plug. In sharp contrast, both Hatanaka and Morgenrath teach the use of either a locking pawl (Hatanaka) or fastener sections (Morgenrath) which are not adapted to disengage at a predetermined release force applied to the plug. Instead, both Hatanaka and Morgenrath are designed to prevent inadvertent disconnection between the plug and socket.

Further, neither Hatanaka nor Morgenrath teaches a method of changing the release force of a plug retaining assembly as recited in claims 4 and 7. Claim 4 includes selecting the wedge angle in accordance with the predetermined release force, while claim 7 includes selecting the

resilience of the retaining clip in accordance with the predetermined release force. Selection of the wedge angle and/or the resilience of the retaining clip are factors which may affect the predetermined release force. Neither Hatanaka nor Morgenrath teaches or suggests this subject matter.

During the telephonic interview, Examiner Nasri appeared to agree that claims 1, 4 and 7 are distinguishable from Hatanaka and Morgenrath, subject to further consideration and an updated search of the prior art.

The amendments to claims 1, 4 and 7 are for the purposes of clarity only and not to patentably distinguish either Hatanaka or Morgenrath.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested.

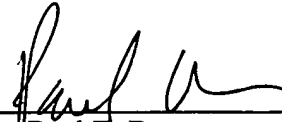
In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that all the claims are patentable and that the entire application is in condition for allowance.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further is desirable to place the application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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